

Duxbury Cultural Alliance

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Cultural Council Turns 25

By LAUREN GRILLI

The Duxbury Cultural Council, a community organization that allocates state funds to cultural and artistic projects in Duxbury, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this summer with a series of Asian-themed festivities.

The council is kicking off their anniversary celebrations with A Taste of China, a Chinese-themed cocktail party that will take place on June 11 at the Art Complex Museum. The event, which is also a fundraiser, will feature traditional food, beverages, and ethnic entertainment, including a lion dancer.

"Duxbury has had a long interaction with Asia," said council member Bill Holmes, referring to 19th century excursions to the Orient in ships owned by Ezra Weston II, or "King Caesar". "In addition to celebrating the anniversary, this is our way of reflecting on that history."

The Duxbury Cultural



Members of the Duxbury Cultural Council met with organizers to plan for their upcoming event, A Taste of China, which will feature live entertainment and traditional food and drink. (L-r): Mary Beth MacQuarrie, Janet Ritch, Allison Cowen, Lynn Smith, Becky Chin, Bill Holmes, Laura Doherty, Alice Vautrain.

the minimum to give out, is \$2,000."

"Duxbury is a town that is well-off economically, so naturally we receive less money than other towns do," said Lynn Smith, president of the council in Duxbury. Previously, the council had received as much as \$7,000 from the state annually.

During the state's fiscal crisis of 2002, revenues dipped

second grade teacher at Chandler School, after returning from a trip to Japan as a Fulbright Scholar.

"One of the requirements of the grant was to bring something back to the school," said Smith. "She created a program for the second grade where they learn about Japanese culture by doing calligraphy, making teacups, learning some of the Japanese

Council is a division of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which gets its funding directly from the state legislature. Museums, performance groups, individual artists and performers apply yearly for grants from the council. After reviewing the candidates, the council appropriates the funds to deserving applicants.

"In the past, we have supported seniors, kids, individuals, groups, and artists' shows," said Janet Ritch, a fourth grade teacher and member of the cultural council. "We've supported events at the senior center, the new performing arts center, and other creative arts performances, as well as [past events like] the Kaleidoscope Fair."

Every town in Massachusetts has a cultural council, and each town receives a different amount of money from the state, according to Greg Liakos of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. "How much each local cultural council receives is determined by a formula," said Liakos. "The base level,

dramatically, and the cultural council was hit severely, according to Liakos. In 2003, the Massachusetts Cultural Council's budget was cut by 62 percent, and as a result, the Duxbury Cultural Council now receives \$2,000 annually.

Receiving less money from the state has forced the members of the council to give larger sums of money to fewer individuals, making the process more selective, according to Holmes.

"We do our own fundraising if we want to give out more than \$2,000. That's why we're doing this [Taste Of China]," said Becky Chin, who is involved in the planning.

The council also receives donations from individuals, said Smith. One of the parents was so impressed with the second grade tea ceremony that she gave the council money specifically for that, according to council member Allison Cowen.

The tea ceremony is one of the Cultural Council's pet projects, said Smith. It was created by Helen Fowler, a

and learning a dance."

At the end of the program, the Duxbury Cultural Council pays to transport the second grade students to the Art Complex, where they take part in a traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony with Glenn Sorei Pereira, one of four tea masters at the Art Complex.

"It shows how scholarship and grant money create ideas which generate more money, which creates more ideas, and so on," said Smith.

The Taste of China cocktail party is the first in a series of Asian-themed celebrations which the council and the Art Complex museum are planning this summer. There will be samples of traditional food and beverages from Tsang's Café, Ming Dynasty, and the Sun Tavern, as well as home-cooked items. Entertainment includes live ethnic music and dancers in costume. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased from a council member or at Westwinds Bookshop.

"We also want to celebrate Chinese culture," said Smith. "That's why we're not raffling off a car [to raise money]."